

I N Q U I R Y

W H E T H E R

*POPERY is a proper Subject of
Toleration, in Protestant States.*

TO determine this question, we need only search that perfect law-book the *Bible*, by which we are hereafter to be judged, and to which, as Protestants, we profess an unlimited and unreserved subjection. And let every man determine, in the sight of God, whether the following are, or are not, its unerring decisions.

The moral law, which was written upon man's heart in innocence, is founded upon our relation to God, and to one another; and, in our present circumstances, cannot be removed, while those relations subsist. Therefore, as it concerned all others, as well as Israel (who were the chosen depositaries and conservators of God's revealed authority and grace) the Lord published it at Sinai, with a voice that
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shook the earth, and afterwards repeatedly wrote it on tables, durable as its foundations; and ordered that these tables should be carefully laid up, with his name in them, in that sacred repository the *ark of the covenant*.— Besides which, he inscribes *the works of this law* upon the heart of every man that comes into the world, that the accusings, or excusings of his own conscience may daily witness its authority over him; and by his Spirit he replaces this law itself (which Christ and his apostles so fully explained and urged, from these ancient records) as a governing principle in the hearts of his servants: therefore to suppose that any man can be happy in a profane inattention to it, would reproach God and our own nature.

And when societies were formed, as human governments could have no other rational basis, but that moral law which all were under to God, so both in that law itself, and in the person to whom he delivered it, the Lord declared his design, that superiors should enforce a subjection to it upon those who were under their control. Therefore he said to parents and masters, in the lower departments of government, *Thou shalt do no manner of work on the sabbath-day, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man-servant, &c.* And to see this, and all the other commands executed, he committed the care of that law to Moses, who was *king in Jeshurun*. And as the scripture cannot

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be broken, which calls all other magistrates *Gods*, as well as him ; and as the Lord has promised to give us, in evangelic times, such *judges and counsellors* as Moses, Joshua, and David were ; and that *kings shall be nursing fathers, and their queens nursing mothers* to his church, therefore it must be his design, that governors should now enforce obedience to the letter of this law ; though not with the same *penalties* as upon the ancient Jews (who were under a peculiar theocracy), *which* were not expressed in the body of this law, nor thundered out from Sinai with a dreadful voice, as the ten commandments themselves were. Ceremonial appendages of the moral law may go out with Moses ; but *grace and truth came by Jesus Christ*, to put life into that long-neglected law. And in his time it is declared, that the magistrate is *the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doth* κακον *moral evil*, Rom. xiii. 4. for which purpose the gospel, as *a ministration of the Spirit*, furnishes him with sufficient instruction and animation.

True, he cannot force men to believe the gospel, nor is this his province : yet, if that spirit is in him which inspired the first governors of Israel, he will devoutly believe and obey every revelation of law and grace which comes from heaven, take care that it may be published to his subjects, and defend the officers and offices of religion in general. At the same time the moral law, which is the
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basis of our intercourse with heaven and earth, will be a prime object of his attention : and, as all nations are under a kind of covenant of works, which denounces dreadful threatenings against violations of every part of this law ; and as God will certainly treat kingdoms and governors as they behave to him (and it would be in vain to expect national blessings to be always continued, without a regard to his authority) therefore the magistrate ought to compel men to pay an attention to the letter of the ten commandments ; for, says the apostle, 1 Tim. i. 5—11. *this law is not made for*, that is, its penalties do not lie against *a righteous man*, but they are *for* ἀνομοῖς καὶ ἀνυπακούοις *the lawless and disobedient*, which words comprehend the sins against both table duties : and, to be yet more particular, its penalties are *for* ἀσεβέσι καὶ αμαρτωλοῖς *the ungodly and for sinners*, against the *first* and *second* commandments ; *for* ἀνοσίοις καὶ βεβηλοῖς *unholy and profane*, who violate the *third* and *fourth* commandments ; as well as *for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers*, against the *fifth* ; *for man-slayers*, who break the *sixth* ; *for whoremongers*, and *for them that defile themselves with mankind*, against the *seventh* ; *for men stealers*, against the *eighth* ; *for liars and for perjured persons*, against the *ninth* ; and if there be any other thing which is contrary to sound doctrine, according as the glorious gospel of the blessed God explains that immutable law. This fixes the magistrate's duty

duty immoveably, and bounds it with exact precision, as it respects this law.

From hence it appears, that it is his duty not to tolerate *sabbath-breaking* against the *fourth* commandment, nor profane *curfing* and *swearing* against the *third*, nor the *making* and *bowing down* to *graven images* against the *second*. Accordingly, that *perfect and upright man* Job asserts, that *idolatry*, as well as *adultery*, is *an iniquity to be punished by the judges*. And the innumerable commands, threatenings, and denunciations against this sin in the scripture sufficiently testify, that God is jealous of his own honour, and will not *give* his *praise* to heathen or christian *graven images*; and that whether the worship paid before them is designed for himself, as the Papists say, or terminates in the devil, as God asserts, Rev. ix. 20. xii. 9. xiii. 4.

Religion and morality are not to be propagated by the sword; yet when they have made their way in the world, by their own native, and by the immediate power of God, they are to be defended by it, both for his sake and for our own. And whatever an idolater may do in secret, where the eye of magistracy cannot reach him, if he *makes* or publicly *bows down* to *graven images*, contrary to the commandment, he does not assert his own, but invades the liberties of others, by doing that which, the scriptures assure us, will bring the curse of a jealous God upon the nation; therefore,
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without touching his person, or his other substance, let the magistrate (who *stands before the God of the earth* for this purpose, Rev. xi. 4.) cause his idol to be removed, or (if that becomes necessary) broken to pieces before his eyes; and reason and scripture will vindicate him in doing this, as often as he presumes to insult the authority of God and of his country, as it stands expressed in the letter of the *second* commandment.

And if public idolatry is not a proper subject for toleration, much less so is *Popery* in the aggregate, which has marked its way, through the world by darkness and by blood. It is said indeed that *Popery* is altered; but this is impossible, unless its doctrines are altered, and then it is no longer *Popery*. Besides, God has said of the *Papists*, Rev. ix. 20, 21. (and the words reach beyond our times) *They repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood; which can neither see, nor hear, nor walk. Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.* And as the Lord has afterwards, in that book, given us a farther prophetic history of their wickedness, of the *vials* of his wrath which are yet to be poured out upon them, and of their impenitence under them, chap. xvi. 6, 9, 11. and concluded with a striking description of the ruin to be inflicted,
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by his own immediate hand, upon them, this proves from the mouth of God, that they neither are, nor ever will be altered for the better. *Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance?* Yet he would more than seem to be so, if he should inflict upon them that vengeance which is written, 1 Thess. ii. 8—12. and Rev. chapters xvi. and xix. if they had previously turned from the sins mentioned above. And though this *woman's being drunken with the blood of the saints, and of the martyrs of Christ*, does not suppose, that even Popery itself can make all its votaries inhuman and savage; yet the Holy Ghost could not have compared *Rome to Sodom, Babylon, and Egypt*, if there had not been a striking similarity between the prevailing dispositions, and the doom of these places; see Rev. xi. 8. and xvii. 5.

Despotism may indeed find Popery a proper engine of its cruel designs; but, as every root will bear fruit agreeable to its own nature, both in church and state, if we tolerate it, do we not make ourselves accessaries to the above six sins; which cannot indeed be punished till they come out into overt *acts*, yet certainly merit abhorrence in that *principle*, which God has asserted will produce them? And, considering the corruption of human nature, if we smile on Popery, it will soon supplant the Church of England; its pompous shows will draw away the giddy multitude from a rational devotion and spiritual worship; and its venial
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fins, indulgences, priestly absolution, purgatory, and denying the scriptures to the laity, open wide the flood-gates for impieties of every name; under whose tyrannic reign civil liberty cannot long exist. Besides, God has said, Jer. xv. 19. *Let them return to thee, but return not thou to them:* and certainly, their restoring to the Protestants abroad a part of their unalienable and eternal rights, can be no reason why we should tolerate their *making*, and publicly *bowing down to graven images*, which God has forbidden to every man.

To conclude; *Toleration* seems to be due to *Protestant* worship of every name among us, but not to *Popish*: and it is happy for England, that this *vox Dei*, is also *vox populi*.

That veneration and affection for my king and country, in which a British breast may well glory, most respectfully submit these plain hints, drawn from the sacred scripture, to your deliberate consideration. And may the glory of God, reflected from his commands and promises, daily bless your rejoicing eyes. Amen.

